

## **Career Planning**

A successful career is the result of setting and achieving career goals over a specified period of time. Achieving these goals depends on the solid foundation of excellent professional performance. Planning a successful career includes:

- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Establishment of career goals
- Recognition of career paths (i.e., identify the roadmap for success)
- Taking advantage of development opportunities
- Follow up on plans and adjustment as necessary

### **Creating a formal career development plan**

After identifying the mentee's key strengths, and his or her areas needing further development, work together on how to effectively enhance the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses. Mentors and mentees should begin with the following questions to create a career development plan.

#### **Identifying Strengths and Setting Goals**

- Short-term
  - What are the mentee's strengths, and where is opportunity for improvement?
  - What are the mentee's professional interests (e.g., logistics, human resources, acquisition, program management, information technology, political-military affairs, foreign disclosure, etc.)?
  - How can they be integrated into the mentee's roadmap and career plans?
  - How can the mentee do the best work possible in the job he/she has now?
    - Emphasizing strengths and interests
    - Developing skills to address improvement areas that lead to future success
    - Training, reading, and networking
  - Why is it important to perform at a high level in every role?
  - With whom should the mentee interact to stay on track and receive ongoing, objective feedback?
- Long-term
  - Where does the mentee want to be professionally in 10 years? (Be specific)
  - What does he/she want to have accomplished by that time?
  - How does this align with the mentee's personal life and goals?

#### **Bridging the Gap—Intermediate Goals and Activities**

- Identify potential career progressions: which roles can the mentee pursue in order to prepare for the long-term goals identified above?
- Training needs: Security Cooperation, functional area advanced training, Leadership skills, IA Certification
- Higher education: Masters degree, GMAP II, Air Force sponsored academic and experiential programs
- Career broadening assignment: which organizations and roles would the mentee like to explore?
- Professional Military Education (PME): SOS, ACSC, AWC, etc.